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AUTHOR Hale, Janice
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ABSTRACT

The goal of this paper is to describe the black cultural style and to demonstrate its relationship to the cognitive development of black children. Children raised within a black cultural environment tend to develop a relational cognitive style rather than the more analytic style required in American schools. Children's cognitive styles are based upon the socialization they receive from family and friendship groups. Research suggests that the cognitive styles of black people place more emphasis upon affect than do Anglo-American cognitive styles. Black culture is more people oriented than object oriented. Blacks communicate nonverbally more than whites and are more sensitive to nonverbal forms of communication. Black art stresses emotional expressiveness and spontaneity, which are important aspects of cultural influences on cognitive style. More wide-ranging examinations of the at-home interaction of black children and of expressive modes of black culture must be undertaken, and a conceptualization of the interaction of black children's behavior developed in order to more clearly describe the world view of the black child. (MK)

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CHILDREARING IN BLACK FAMILIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Janice Hale, Ph.D.
Research Associate
Department of Psychology
Yale University

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Janice Hale, Ph.D.

W.E.B. DuBois described the Black person in America as possessing two "warring souls". On one hand, Black people are products of their Afro-American heritage and culture. On the other hand they are shaped by the demands of Anglo-American culture. I could think of no better way to characterize the task of an Afro-American psychologist who attempts to operationalize the essence of the Afro-American ethos into Anglo-American constructs.

What is soul? How can one describe for the uninitiated the spirit that wells up within you during a musical selection by the gospel choir that you just don't feel when singing an anthem? How can you capture on canvas the rhythmic sway of a Black man as he steps down the street to the beat of his own inner drum? What is soul? How can you explain the Black preacher who asks for a witness and the parishioner who responds that "I just want to testify"? What is soul?

We, who share the spirituality of the Black experience know it and feel it. We know that Black people transform every cultural mode they interact with: language, music, religion, art, dance, problem solving, sports, writing, or any other area of human expression. However, the task of this paper is to describe this "soulfulness" and to demonstrate its relationship to the cognitive development of Black children. It is also important to indicate the conflict that

ensues when Black children are evaluated in reference to an Anglo-centric framework.

Asa Hilliard has set forth some basic assumptions about human behavioral styles.

1) A behavioral style is a framework from which a person views the world.

2) There are several styles which can be described. At one extreme is the analytic and at the other extreme is the relational with other possible styles on a continuum in between.

3) A person may change his or her basic style by learning aspects of other styles.

4) Since styles are the framework from which one views the world, the style can be observed in all areas of his expression.

5) There is some relationship between style and socioeconomic level.

6) There is a strong relationship between style and cultural or ethnic group membership, especially where, a given ethnic group is also located at a traditonal point on the socioeconomic scale.

7) There is no evidence that there is a relationship between basic intelligence and style. Able people are found to the same degree among all style users.

8) Every style is necessary, valuable and useful in human experience if society is to function fully.

9) A 'gifted' person is one who has integrated and harmonized the different styles within himself or herself to focus one harmonized style.

Hilliard has gone further to describe the core of Afro-American cultural style.

1) Afro-American people tend to respond to things in terms of the whole picture instead of its parts. The Euro-American tends to believe that anything can be divided and sub-divided into pieces and that these pieces add up to a whole. Therefore, art is sometimes taught by numbers as well as dancing and music. That is why some people never learn to dance. They are too busy counting and analyzing.

2) Afro-American people tend to prefer inferential reasoing to deductive or inductive.

3) Afro-American people tend to approximate space, numbers and time rather than stick to accuracy.

4) Afro-American people tend to prefer to focus on people and their activities rather than things. This is shown by the fact that so many Black students choose careers in the helping professions such as teaching, psychology, social work and so forth, even though there are not an abundance of jobs in those areas and the curriculum is not particularly easy.

5) Afro-American people have a keen sense of justice and are quick to analyze and perceive injustice.

6) Afro-American people tend to lean toward altruism, a concern for one's fellow man.

7) Afro-American people tend to prefer novelty, freedom and personal distinctiveness. This is shown in the development of improvisations in music and styles of clothing.

8) Afro-American people in general tend not to be "word" dependent. They tend to be very proficient in non-verbal as well as verbal communication.

Dr. N'im Akbar has also proposed a description of the Afro-American child. Characteristics are:

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Insert Table I here

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Rosalie Cohen (1969) has identified two styles of learning. One is called the analytical style and the other is the relational style. These styles refer to differences in the methods of selecting and classifying information.

Asa Hilliard (1976) has compiled a summary of the characteristics of two of the styles identified by Cohen.

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Insert Table II here

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The school requires one specific approach to cognitive organization--analytic (Cohen 1969:829). Pupils who have not developed these skills and those who function with a different cognitive style will not only be poor achievers early in school, they will become worse as they move to higher grade levels.

Not only does the school reward the development of the analytic styles of processing information, but its overall ideology and environment reinforces behaviors associated with that style.

> Aspects of analytic style can be found in the requirements that the pupil learn to sit increasingly long periods of time, to concentrate alone on impersonal learning stimuli, and to observe and value organized time-allotment schedules. (Cohen 1969:830)

The differences between children who function with relational and analytic styles is so great that a child whose cognitive organization is relational is unlikely to be rewarded socially with grades

TABLE I

The Afro-American Child
(Na'im Akbar)

Highly affective
Language requires wide use of coined interjections (sometimes profanity)
Considerable body language
Words depend upon context for meaning and have little meaning in themselves.
Multi-connotive expressions, that is, the same word has multiple meanings.
Systematic uses of nuances of intonation and other body language, such as eye movement and positioning.
Preference for oral-aural modalities for learning communication
Highly sensitive to others' non-verbal cues
High people orientation
Sociocentric
Use of internal cues for problem solving
Highly empathic
Spontaneity
Rapid adaptation to novel stimuli

TABLE II

ANALYTICAL AND RELATIONAL COGNITIVE STYLES
(compiled from Rosalee Cohen)
by Asa Hilliard

Analytical Style

Stimulus centered
Parts-specific
Finds non-obvious attributes
Abstracts common or generalizable principle of a stimulus
Notices formal properties of a stimulus that have relatively stable and long lasting meanings
Ignores the idiosyncratic
Extracts from embedded context
Names extracted properties and gives them meaning in themselves
Relationships tend to be linear
Relationships which are noticed tend to be static and descriptive other than functional or inferential
Relationships seldom involve process or motivation as a basis for relations
Perception of conceptual distance between observers and observed
An objective attitude--a belief that everything takes place "out there" in the stimulus
Stimulus viewed as formal, long lasting and relatively constant, therefore there is opportunity to study it in detail
Long attention span
Long concentration span
Greater perceptual vigilance
A reflective attitude and relatively sedentary nature
Language style is standard English of controlled elaboration
Language depends upon relatively long lasting and stable meanings of words
Language depends upon formal and stable rules of organization
Communications are intended to be understood in themselves, i.e., without dependence upon non-verbal cues or idiosyncratic context
"Parts of speech" can readily be seen in nonsense sentences
Analytic speech characterized by "hesitation phenomena," pauses for verbal planning by controlled vocal modulation and revision of sentence organization to convey specific meaning, since words have formal meanings
Sometimes view of self expressed as an aspect of roles such as function to be performed
View of self tends to be in terms of status-roles

Relational Style

Self-centered
Global
Fine descriptive characteristics
Identifies the unique
Ignores commonalities
Embedded for meaning
Relevant concepts must have special or personal relevance to observer
Meanings are unique depending upon immediate context
Generalizations and linear notions are generally unused and devalued
Easily angered by minor frustrations
Immediacy of response
Short attention span
Short concentration span
Gestalt learners
Descriptive abstraction for word selection
Words must be embedded in specific time bound context for meaning
Few synonyms in language
Language dependent upon unique context and upon many interactional characteristics of the communicants

The Relational Style (continued)

Parts of the stimulus and its non-obvious attributes are not given names and appear to have no meaning in themselves
Relationships tend to be functional and inferential
Since emphasis is placed on the unique and the specific, global and the discrete, on notions of difference rather than on variation or common things, the search for mechanism to form abstract generalizations is not stimulated
Responses tend to be affective
Perceived conceptual distance between the observer and the observed is narrow
The field is perceived as responding to the person
Distractable
Over involved in all activities
on time and place, on inflection, muscular movements and other non-verbal cues
Fluent spoken language
Strong colorful expressions
Wide range of meaningful vocal intonation and inflection
Condensed conditions sensitivity to hardly perceptible variations of mood and tone in other individuals and in their surroundings
Poor response to timed, scheduled, preplanned activities which interfere with immediacy of response
Tends to ignore structure
Self descriptions tend to point to essence
The field may have a life of its own
Personification of the inanimate
Emotional

TABLE III

The School
(compiled by Asa Hilliard)

As it is in general (Analytical)	As it could be (Relational)
Rules	Freedom
Standardization	Variation
Conformity	Creativity
Memory for specific facts	Memory for essence
Regularity	Novelty
Rigid order	Flexibility
"Normality"	Uniqueness
Differences equal deficits	Sameness equals oppression
Preconceive	Improvise
Precision	Approximate
Logical	Psychological
Atomistic	Global
Egocentric	Sociocentric
Convergent	Divergent
Controlled	Expressive
Meanings are universal	Meanings are contextual
Direct	Indirect
Cognitive	Affective
Linear	Patterned
Mechanical	Humanistic
Unison	Individual in group
Hierarchical	Democratic
Isolation	Integration
Deductive	Inductive
Scheduled	Targets of opportunity
Thing focused	People focused
Constant	Evolving
Sign oriented	Meaning oriented
Duty	Loyalty

regardless of his native ability, the depth of his information or his background of experience. In fact, he will probably be considered deviant and disruptive in the analytically oriented learning environment of the school. (Cohen 1969:830).

Asa Hilliard (1976:41) agrees that the school supports the analytic cognitive style. The table below contrasts schools that would be based upon the analytical and the relational cognitive style.

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Insert Table III here

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Origins of Cognitive Style

Cohen (1969:831) suggests that children develop their cognitive styles based upon the socialization they receive in their families and friendship groups. She analyzes that children who participate in structured families with what she calls "formal" styles of group organization have been observed to function with analytical cognitive style. Those children who live in more fluid families which she calls "shared-function" primary groups, are more likely to utilize relational cognitive styles.

While that explanation has some merit, more work is needed to describe the socialization of Black children that gives rise to distinctive cognitive styles.

Affective Orientation

The cognitive styles of Black people seem to place a greater degree of emphasis upon affect than Anglo-Americans.

The realms of feeling and affect and the cognitive processes arising from interpersonal relations may have important implications

for Black people. Research suggests that Black people are a very emotional people. Some scholars have suggested that the emotion-charged, people-oriented quality of Black expression is a part of an African heritage:

> Knowledge in Western societies is largely derived from such propositions as "I thin, therefore, I am." The non-Western heritage of Afro-Americans suggests that knowledge stems from the proposition that, "I feel therefore I think, therefore, I am." (Dixon and Foster, 1971:18)

> The uniqueness of Black culture can be explained in that it is a culture whose emphasis is on the nonverbal. . . in Black culture, it is the experience that counts, not what is said. (Lester, 1969:87)

This doesn't mean that Black people don't think or conceptualize their experience symbolically; rather, these scholars suggest that intellectual analysis disconnected from feelings leads to incomplete knowledge of the world. (Haskins and Butts, 1973)

Many research studies have found Black children to be more feeling-oriented, people-oriented and more proficient at non-verbal communication than white children. It is important to determine the implications of this on their cognitive development. (Gitters, Black and Mostofsky 1972: 63-78)

Research (Young, 1970) has suggested that white children are object oriented. That is, they have numerous opportunities to manipulate objects and discover properties and relationships. Consequently, this society's educational system is very object-oriented. Classrooms are filled with educational hardware and technology--books, listening stations, learning centers, televisions, programmed instruction, learning kits and so forth.

Research with Black children in contrast has found them to be more people oriented. Most Black children grow up in large families

where they have a great deal of human interaction. This writer observed this high degree of human interaction while traveling in Africa. The writer was interested in the kinds of dolls with which the children of Ghana play. An African mother informed me that African children don't play with dolls, they play with their mother's babies. This high degree of people orientation may account for the indifferentness with which some Black children regard books and devices. It may also expalin why some teachers complain that Black children will not work independently and cling to the teacher. I observed a classroom in which there were children who would work only when older children assisted them individually. It may be that this cultural trait may need to be acknowledge with the result being more human interaction in the learning process.

The work of Virginia Young (1970:276) is notable in providing evidence about childrearing practices that influence this "people orientation."

> Even though household composition varies widely in the Black community, each is almost certain to contain many different types of people of all ages to hold and play with the baby. In many cases, the physical closeness between infants and adults is reinforced by the fact that they are often observed to sleep with their parents or either parent alone. There is a kind of rhythm found between eating and napping with short periods of each activity found with frequent repetition. This rhythm is very different from the disciplined long span of attention cultivated in middle-class childrearing and expected in schools. (276)

Because the babies are held so much of the time, there is a direct response to urination and bowel movements. Hence, from an early age, there is an association in the infant's mind between these functions and a response from the mother. Consequently, when the mother seeks to toilet train the child (in the early and stringent manner that has been observed in the Black community), the child is

accustomed to her direct involvement in this process. In contrast, the transition is more startling for middle-class American infants whose functions have typically occurred alone. The mother begins to interfere with the bowel and bladder functions after many months of paying no attention to them. There is greater continuity in the behavior of Black mothers. (278)

Young contrasts the highly personal interaction with the low object orientation found in Black families. She noticed that few objects were given to the babies. The only type observed were some plastic toys that may have been picked up in the supermarket while shopping. Also, when babies reached to grasp an object or feel a surface, they were often redirected to feeling the holder's face or engaged in a game of "rubbing faces" as a substitute. This inhibition of exploration is possible because:

> there are always eyes on the baby and idle hands to take away the forbidden objects and then distract the frustrated baby. The personal is thus often substituted for the impersonal. (279-280)

This affective orientation may be a critical factor that is overlooked in traditional educational settings. Rapport with the teacher in educational settings and rapport with the examiner in testing settings seems to be strongly related to academic performance for Black students and not very critical for whites. Zigler and his colleagues (Zigler and Butterfield, 1968; Zigler, Abelson, and Seitz, 1973) found that when a good rapport was established between an examiner during a standardized testing session, the Black children exhibited significantly superior test performance than when it was not. Such a difference was not found in the white middle-class sample.

Pierstrup (1973) has catalogued some of the factors which create good rapport in the teacher-Black student interaction. She demonstrated that when those factors were present, they increased the reading proficiency of 1st grade Black pupils.

It may be useful to examine some aspects of African culture to identify antecedents for the affective orientation of Afro-Americans.

Akpan Esen (1973:205-211) analyzes the childrearing practices found in Nigeria to point out global differences in the culture between the United States and Africa. He maintains that there are differences in the attitudes and modes of interaction in interpersonal relationships found in these two culture. He refers to the clusters of African attitudes and modes of response as the Care Syndrome.

Esen d4scribes the African as being his brother's keeper. He grows up in a small rural community for the most part and is imbued from early childhood with an empathetic concern for his fellows. In contrast, people who grow up in Western societies often do not know their neighbors and have detached urban attitudes. They do not know what it means to care about the people in their communities or to offer help to those who are in even desperate need of help. (205-206)

Esen suggests that the African modes of childrearing give rise to the development of humane attitudes and the care syndrome. Unlike western childrearing, African socialization emphasizes the closeness of man to man. Physical and psychological closeness is reinforced by encouragement of body-contact between people. (207)

The African child receives more body contact than his Western counterpart. Most children are breast-fed and for longer periods of time than is found in other societies. Before and after he learns

to walk he spends a great deal of time being held by his older sibling. In most cases the child sleeps with his mother during infancy until a new baby arrives. The african child learns early in his childhood to embrace relatives and friends in greeting them or thanking them for a special favor. Thus, the child grows up in a social network that is characterized by physical closeness, acceptance and care. He expects to receive affection and comfort and learns to give it when it is needed by others.

By the time an African child is six years old, he begins to take responsibility for providing care for a younger sibling. He carries the child on his back, cradles the child on his lap and learns to respond with body-contact and carrying behavior to fit the various needs of the child.(207)

Esen analyzes that in Western society, objects come between the child and his mother. The babies are more prone to be bottle-fed, carried around in baby carriages, placed in playpens to play alone, placed in separate rooms in a different bed for sleeping. These gadgets come physically between the baby and his mother's body and interfere with the physical and psychological body-warmth that is provided in Africa. (208)

From the African viewpoint, the Western child is socialized into a life of detachment and impersonality. These early attitudes are reinforced by the urban environment. People are seen as things in the distance or numbers in the computer. A basic aloofness is developed toward people that begins with the distance from the mother created by the feeding bottle and the baby carriage. (208)

Esen suggests that the Care Syndrome is reflected in the use of language among African people. One key indicator he describes is

the method of greeting and other polite exchanges. Africans have elaborate greetings for practically every kind of situation people are involved in. Foreigners are often astounded by the elaborateness and emotionality of African greetings. The greeting always includes inquiries about people who are important to the person.

This is contrasted with Western greetings which discuss the weather and rarely inquire about human life and conditions.

> The closest they ever seem to come to some concern for the individual is with "How are you?" And even that in American usage has become impersonalized into a mere "Hi". (208)

When a gift is acknowledged, the recipient offers thanks as well as a kind wish to the giver. (An example cited by Esen is Sosongo which means May you grow stronger in the Efix language which is spoken in South Eastern Nigeria). In the English language one merely offers thanks to the giver in what often becomes an impersonal business transaction.

Esen states further that African children grow up speaking a language that expresses caring and feeling to a greater extent than Western children. Therefore, they are more prone to develop the attitude of caring since their lifestyle encourages those feelings.(209)

The extended family system supports the care syndrome. The child comes to see parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins as a part of his everyday life. Every older person participates in caring for him and all have claims on his concern and care when they are needed. The survival of the family depends upon how the members care about and provide for each other.

This situation usually does not exist in Western culture. The nuclear family structure of father-mother-child does not encourage

this extended caring network. Usually parents are eager for their teenage children to live on their own and solve their own problems. The children in turn are eager to live on their own as soon as possible. Grandparents usually must fend for themselves during their last helpless years or be sent to old people's homes surrounded by strange people and impersonal relationships. Thus, children are deprived of the nurture they could have received from grandparents. (209)

The extended family system also provides the child with a number of male models found in father, uncles, grown-up brothers and cousins. Thus, if their father is absent they have other men in the household to relate to and identify with. (209)

Brazelton's (1971) findings support Esen's thesis in a study in which he compared infants born to Zambian mothers and infants born to white American mothers. The health of the Zambian mothers was not optimal. They had less protein in their diets because of its expense, increased infections and more frequent pregnancies which limited the recovery of the uterus after childbirth. As can be expected, the Zambian infants weighed less, were smaller in length and less healthy than the white infants.

The two groups of infants were scored on days one, five and ten after birth. On the day one examination, the two groups were significantly different on six items. The Zambian inftnas scores lower on: following with eyes, motor activity, tempo at height, irritability, rapidity of buildup and on alertness.

By day ten the Zambian babies had achieved greater advances than the American infants. This was attributed to the affect implicit in the mother-child relationship.

Even though the African infants were not as healthy at birth, they had surpassed the American infants in cuddliness, reactivity to stimulation, alertness, social interest and consolability.

The Zambian mothers provided a high contact, loving environment for their babies. They were observed to have more handling and feeding contact with their infants than the American mothers.

Non-Verbal Communication

It has been reported that there is a minimal amount of verbal exchange in lower-class families. Young observes that this is because of the abundance of communication in other forms. She observed people to look deeply into each other's eyes, not speaking, but seeming to communicate fully. She suggests that parents use this to impress a point on a child. It has been notes that Black people avoid meeting the eyes of whites and this has been interpreted as a gesture of nonequality. However, Young suggests that it may, instead be a gesture of noncommunicativeness, in view of the extensive communication through looking into the eyes within the Black group. Other forms of nonverbal communication are the mother's caressing of the baby and children sitting in a circle rubbing bare feet. Young also notes what she calls a "mutuality" in family relations exhibited in remarks that pass between mothers and children.

> 'I'm tired,' the three year-old girl complains. 'I'm tired too,' her mother responds. 'I want some ice cream,' the eight year-old syas wistfully as the ice cream truck passes. 'I want some too,' is the mother's way of sying no. This echoing of words and tone of voice is a common speech pattern. One does not see mothers and children clash and contend.

Young concludes that there are distinctive cultural styles that provide the milieu for the personality formation of Black children.

Out of this people-oriented, emotion-charged African heritage grows an ability to communicate extensively non-verbally as well

as verbally. Some white educators had noticed that often Black children would not 'look them in the eye' when they were speaking to them. They considered this either to be a gesture of inequality or a sign of inattention. It may be neither. There are two possible explanations for this. One is that it is a part of our African heritage to respect our elders. To look an authority figure directly in the eye is considered defiant and disrespectful. Another explanation is that Black people are very expressive non-verbally. So, often the gaze of whites is avoided to cut off that intense level of communication that Black people share with each other.

Two studies (Newmeyer 1970; Gitter, Black and Mostofsky 1972) provide support for the phyothesis that Black culture develops proficiency in non-verbal communication. Newmeyer had a group of Black and white boys act out a number of emotions nonverbally. The Black boys were better at enacting the emotions so that others perceived them correctly Gitter, Black and Mostofsky conducted a study with Black and white college students. Each student was tested by a member of his own race and was shown still photographs of professional actors taken while the actors were attempting to portray each of seven emotions: anger, happiness, disgust, sadness, pain, fear and surprise. The subjects were asked to assign to each of the photograhps one of the seven emotions. The Black students made significantly more correct judgments of emotion.

Another example of non-verbal communication is found in the differences between the behavior of Black and white athletes in professional sports. When Kermit Washington of the Los Angeles Lakers critically injured Rudy Tomajnovich of the Houston Rockets, some people felt that it was caused by a cultural difference in

nonOverbal communication. Rudy, who is white, said that he entered the fight area to assist his teammate, not to fight. However, Kermit, who is Black, reacted spontaneously and interpreted the person charging toward him from the opposite team as a foe. It is interesting that none of the Black players charged into the area. In fact, Dr. J (Julius Erving) has been observed to sit under the bucket when a fight develops to clearly communicate that he is not involved. Kareem Abdul-Jabber explained recently (Jet February 16, 1978) why most of his fights were with whites:

> If you can buy this, it has to do with body language. Anyone from a Black community can obviously look at someone and say, 'I'm not going to fool around with this guy, because he's ready to fight.' A white player is slow to pick up on that.

Diane McIntyre* described this feeling-oriented spirituality that characterizes Black culture as it is expressed in the art of dance. She says that Black dance differs from white dance in that white dancers to a greater degree are into technical dancing.

> The dancer makes a movement, not as an expression of feeling or as part of communicating an idea, but mainly to show that such a movement can be done. Black dance usually deals more with feelings and ideas. Don't get me wrong now. I don't mean to say Black dancers don't have great technique. There are Black dancers out there who can out-technique anyone, but this is usually combined with feeling and an emphasis on reaching out to communicate.

McIntyre analyzes that this difference is most likely associated with differences in Black and white culture. Art in Black society seems to have a spiritual role that is not evident in white art. However, that very quality often affects the ability of Black artists to become funded because funding is given on the basis of recognition. Most dance critics praise technique with little interest in emotions and communicating while Black artists

*Interview in Essence Magazine, September 1977, Rapping with Diane McIntyre.

value them as being equally important. Therefore many Black artists do not receive favorable reviews because their efforts are described as too simple and emotional.

Movement

Harry Morgan (1976:133) suggests that Black infants are superior in all aspects of development when the mothers have adequate prenatal care. He also points out that Black children are motorically precocious. They are more active and have more physical energy to expend than white children. This physical precocity can be substantiated by the number of Black athletes who dominate the major sports in numbers that are far disproportionate to Black representation in the population.

Morgan maintains that the schools do not support the natural energy level of Black children. He suggests that Black children need an active environment for successful learning. He states that this is particularly true of lower-income children whose parents emphasize survival skills primarily rather than conformity, docility and quiet manners which is more typical of middle-class childrearig where upward mobility is sought.

Black children are described as entering school for the first time with excitement and enthusiasm. However, the school then crushes the freedom and creativity of the children who cannot channel their energy until given permission to release it. Consequently Black children elicit more punishment and are labeled hyperactive more frequently because of their high motoric activity. (129)

Morgan believes that Black mothers often ignore their children's motoric precocity and do not seek to extend it because development in that area might interfere with the child's ability to be integrated into the school system of white low motor expectations.

This situation, he maintains, is detrimental to the natural learning styles of Black children. The school turns into a miniature battleground as the school reacts punitively to the Black child's natural release of motor energy. (130)

Morgan suggests that Black children need schools that are "uncrowded, open and airy with a great deal of natural light, plenty of private space for teachers and learners." He suggests further that model classrooms should be established for research purposes where "special nonpunitive environments are created as centers of learning for children who require more free space and movement than what schools normally allow." (130)

Some Black children, Morgan states, are able to quell their motor responses. Those who are not able to are usually in the lower-income levels and are labeled disruptive children, prescribed medication, placed in "problem" classes where cognitive expectations are low or are suspended from school where they are ignored. (131)

Educators often complain that Black lower-income mothers do not provide enough toys for their children. Therefore compensatory education programs purchase toys and playthings to distribute to their mothers. Morgan indicts these efforts:

> Little thought was given to the fact that the tinker toy concept dictates that children are expected to sit in the crib or thereabouts and play quietly with their toys until their favorite TV program comes on. Without these toys, of coures, mother and child touch, exchange various forms of communications and learn from one another. (133)

Morgan states that in California in 1976, 25% of the children were classified as hyperactive. This group includes approximately "2 million children who are taking tranquilizers, amphetamines and Ritalin -- the latter being a behavior-modifying drug." The effects

of these drugs taken on a daily basis are not known. The only known fact is that the children are more quiet. (134)

The danger in these practices is that they force Black children to conform to a white cognitive model. It also makes Black mothers more reluctant to support and extend the natural motoric responses of their children. When a mother constantly recieves reports of misbehavior at school by older children, she may become more punitive and restrictive of the behavior of younger preschoolers. Morgan insists:

> These mothers need encouragement and support in initiating and sustaining an active, thoughtful environment of unrestricted warm acceptance.
>
> Black children who find themselves too often among unwelcoming and uncaring adults and hostile institutions need all the developmental freedom they can muster to build muscle necessary for encountering the very white society in which we all live.

Wade Boykin (1968) suggests that the Black home environment provides an abundance of stimulation, intensity and variation. There is a relatively high noise level with televisions on a significant amount of time and constant stereophonic music in the evnironment. There are usually large numbers of people per living space and a number of a variety of activities. This has been analyzed as "over stimulation" and as creating "conceptual deafness" by some social scientists (Marous and Lourie, 1967; Goldman and Sanders, 1969; Wach, Uygiris and Hunt, 1971). However, Boykin suggests that this Black, stimulating home environment produces greater psychological and behavioral "verve" in Black children than children possess in a white middle-class setting. Exposure to more constant high and variable stimulation, he argues, has led to a higher chronic activation

level. Therefore, Black children have an increased behavioral vibrancy and an increased psychological affinity for stimulus change and intensity.

It has been pointed out that schools are rather unstimulating and monotonous places to be (Silberman, 1970; Holt 1964). Boykin suggests that factors like investigatory exploration, behavioral change, and novelty and variability have not been incorporated into the classroom. He suggests further, that the reason white children are more successful at academic tasks than Black children is that they have a greater tolerance for monotony in academic task presentation formats. They may not perform as well if they were faced with increasing levels of format variation and stimulation or if they were asked to utilize movement more in the learning process. On the other hand, perhaps Black children are not as successful in school because they are relatively more intolerant of monotonous, boring tasks and the sterile unstimulating school environment.

Boykin describes "verve" as having a behavioral and a psychological dimension. As an example of behavioral verve, Boykin suggests that Black children may learn faster with techniques that incorporate body movement into the learning process. Guttentag (1972; Guttentag and Ross, 1972) found that Black preschool children possess a greater movement repertoire than both lower and middle-class white preschoolers. She has also shown that Black children learned simple verbal concepts easier when they utilized movement than when they were taught by a more traditional format. On the other side of the coin, Massari et. al. (1969 have found that the children who can inhibit movement have higher IQ scores. Boykin is presently investigating

the effect of incorporating movement into education settings upon the academic performance of Black children.

By psychological verve, Boykin means that variation or stimulation in task formats may make a difference in improving the performance of Black children. Rohwer and Harris (1975) found that 4th grade Black children learned prose more easily when it was presented in a variety of formats (oral, written or pictures) as compared with presenting it in only one way. There was no difference found in using a combination of media with white children. Piestrup (1973) found that the most effective teachers of reading for 1st grade Black children were those who varied their vocal intonation and engaged in rhythmic verbal interplay with the children. This is compatible with the observation by Virginia Young that there is a "contest" style of speech between Black mothers and children in which they volley rhythmically and the child is encouraged to be assertive and develop an individual style. Young also suggests that there is a distinctive manner by which Black mothers give directions for household tasks. She suggests that it approximates the call and response patterns found in Black music. (A mother's communication of directions in household tasks uses few words, and tasks for which she has to give instructions are broken down into small units with brief directions for each short task following on completion of the previous one).

The effectiveness of the use of rhythm in speech and verbal interplay by teachers of Black children may connect culturally with Black children who interact rhythmically with their mothers at home.

Boykin has found in his own research (1975) that varying the format in problem solving tasks that were presented to Black and

white children did not make a difference in the performance of the white children. However, the Black children performed markedly better in the varied format condition.

Boykin concludes that affective stimulation and vervistic stimulation are necessary for the Black child to be motivated to achieve in an academic setting. He suggests that this is the reason why Black children become turned off by the sterile, boring school environment and seek other arenas for achievement and expression. He suggests that "perhaps we can facilitate the academic/task performance of the Black child if we increase the "soulfulness" of the academic task setting.

This brings us back to the topic with which we began this discussion -- What is soul? How can we conduct a micro-analysis of Black culture that can yield those aspects of the Afro-American ethos that should be considered in the design of learning environments for Black children?

We must conduct a wide-ranging examination of all aspects of at-home interaction that can provide descriptive information about the world-view of the Black child. We must create a conceptualization of the cultural context of Black children's behavior before we can extract meaning from the behavior that the context gives rise to. There are several expressive modes of Black culture that should be examined:

movement
dance
music
environmental arts
fashion arts
folklore
nutrition
magico-spiritual beliefs

Movement

This would be an examination of the amount of space that is utilized during play. Consideration would also be given to the manner in which space is utilized. It would be interesting to determine the amount of time the child spends in quiet activities as compared with active movement. This may have implications for the length of time adults should require children to sit and concentrate on tasks. Cursory observations by this writer suggest that Black children (particularly males) are very active in their home environments and are penalized as hyperactive in the schools.

Dance

The quality of movement needs to be described. What are the stages by which Black children respond to music? How much reinforcement are they given as toddlers to dance in addition to encouragement to walk. Could early expressions of rhythm through dance have any influence upon the physical precocity of Black children that has often been observed and reported? Does early proficiency in dance affect mathematical ability in terms of early proficiency in utilizing and locating oneself in space?

Music

How prevalent is music in the Black environment? What is the preferred type of music? How often are songs sung to children and by children? What songs are sung? What is responsibile for the remarkable ability Black children demonstrate to memorize popular songs? How can that ability be utilized in other types of learnings?

Environmental Arts

There is a need to conduct an ethnographical study of Black home environments. Most descriptions of Black home environments have focused upon deprivation as defined by white America. A description of the environments in which Black children live, play

and develop should encompass artistic descriptors as well as analyses of indicators of affluence and educational enrichment. Note should be taken of color preferences in furnishings in Black homes as well as any other distinctive features in decor, furniture styles and arrangement. This information may be useful in designing learning environments for Black children. It would be interesting, for example, if it were discovered that Black children learned most effectively or exhibited distinctive moods based upon the colors that were used on the walls of the classrooms.

Fashion Arts

It has long been an accepted fact that Black people have emphasized person distinctiveness in their dress. Black males in particular have impacted the fashion industry and set many trends among which are wide-leg pants as well as the inclusion of bright colors in men's suits and shirts. It may be interesting to study types of clothing that are worn by Black children for various occasions. This study would note the choice of colors, fabrics and styles. It might be interesting to compare the clothing that is worn at home for play and that which is worn at school. It would be interesting to discover the extent to which the children are dressed according to the tastes of their parents or whether and at what age they begin to express preferences and make choices. Then those choices could be analyzed to determine the extent to which they are shaped by the Black cultural milieu. Fashion is a very important cultural vehicle for expressing creativity.

Folklore

An ethnographical study of expressive styles should record the folklore of Black children. Most studies of language of Black children are interested in language from a linguistic perspective,

that is, the structure of its usage. However, it may also be useful to study the verbal skills of Black children, illustrated by: rappin', shuckib' and jivin', running it down, coppin' a plea, signifyin' an' soundin'. There are also stylistic dimensions of the oral tradition in Black culture as described by Silverman (1973): call and response, rhythmic pattern, spontaneity and concreteness.

In considering folklore, an ethnographical study should be conducted of games, stories, chants, jump rope rhymes, curse words, playin' the dozens. Once these cultural artifacts are recorded, they can perhaps be analyzed to ascertain the psychological processes they reflect.

There may also be another aspect of play behavior that is affected by the folklore of the Black community. An understanding of Black folklore would facilitate the interpretation of fantasy among Black children. Fantasy is very important in the development of children. The ability to fantasize and imagine is very closely related to the development of creative thought and cognitive abilities. However, it is important to understand the way in which the culture of the Black community affects the fantasy of Black children.

Nutrition

There is a popular slogan that says, "what you eat is what you are". If that is true, then study of the nutritional environment of Black children may be important in interpreting their behavior. This study of Black foods should encompass food selection and spicing. There should be definite trends in these areas that are common to Black people and related to the African heritage. This information would have obvious implications for health services. However, it

would also be helpful in planning nutritional curricula for Black children in the schools. Many day care and child development programs design their menus from nutrition manuals with little thought or understanding of the nutritional preferences of children that have been shaped by their culture. Many of the meals that are prepared in institutional settings are rejected by the children. This may add another area in which school is defined by the child to be a strange alien environment.

Joyce Rookwood* of the Administration for Children, Youth and Families/DHEW suggests investigating the feeding patterns of Black families. This information could be useful to programs like Head Start. Presently teachers are instructed to utilize "family style" feeding in which the children are seated in groups and conversation is encouraged. Ms. Rookwood first questions the definition of "family style" -- whose family? She observed a teacher in a Head Start center who was having the children eat one by one. She questioned the teacher about the practice. The teacher replied that this pattern of eating was more similar to the style of eating of many of the children at home wherein family members "catch a plate" whenever they arrive and are hungry. She found that the children played less at the table, ate more and seemed to feel better, possibly from better digestion. The teacher stated that children eat better when they can concentrate on eating rather than telling the teacher the color of the peas.

Magical-Spiritual Beliefs

The spiritual mode should be studied as an expression of the cosmology of the Black child. A deep concern with the spiritual and the supernatural among Black children has been noted in their

*Comment offered during a seminar conducted by the writer at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in New York City, August 1978.

creative activities.* Black children have been observed to express interest in ghosts and religious rituals. Examining these mod4s will help to better understand the cosmology or world-view of the Black child and determine the implications for concept development.

This discussion clearly points out the need for further research in this area. It is also clear to see that it is important for the members of ethnic groups to take the leadership in research that defines their own culture and learning styles.

The story has been told of a child named Akin who was accustomed to hearing bedtime stories each night that told of Tarzan and the Lion. In each episode, Tarzan always defeated the Lion. So, one night, Akin asked his mother when the Lion was going to win. His mother closed the book and sighed, "Honey, I guess the Lion will beat Tarzan, when lions begin to write books."

*Personal conversation with Michele Rubin, Director of Arts-in-Education at Clark College, Atlanta, Georgia 1975.

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